

As an advocate with Food Allergy Research & Education, I am writing to you to voice my support of HB 5452. The bill addresses important concerns regarding the safety of students, including allowing school transportation personnel to intervene in an allergic emergency, having the state update current school food allergy guidelines, and putting policies in place to keep food allergic students safely participating in culinary programs.

In Connecticut, up to 8 percent of children have a food allergy. An allergic reaction can escalate to anaphylaxis within minutes and, if left untreated, may cause death. Food allergy is the most common cause of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medications and latex are other triggers.

Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis. It is safe and simple to administer. That said, hardly any districts in CT, less than 30 percent, allow and require bus drivers to be trained in administering the epi pen. That means that thousands of parents can't allow their child to ride the bus in elementary school as a child that age can't verbalize or self administer when having a reaction. I personally didn't allow my child to ride the bus until middle school this year. The bus driver is aware of the allergy and will pull over to call 911 if something happens. Depending on where the bus is, it could take up to 20 minutes for emergency personnel to respond since we are a small town.

That 20 minutes could be the difference between life and death for my child and thousands of others. Wouldn't it be simpler, safer and more effective to allow and MANDATE bus drivers to administer epipen in the event of an emergency? I implore you to explore the options but there is only one solution--there needs to be a trained adult on every bus with a child that has a deadly food allergy.

For these reasons, I ask you to bring HB 5452 to a vote and vote YES.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

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